NCA
VOC FOR PGM/FN
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JOHN ROBERTS/JOHANNESBURG

RHODESIA'S GOVERNMENT STRAINS

ANNCR:

A COLLAPSE OF RHODESIA'S INTERIM GOVERNMENT WAS AVERTED BY BISHOP ABEL MUZOREWA'S SUNDAY DECISION NOT TO PULL OUT. BUT ALTHOUGH THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT IS STILL INTACT, THERE WERE LOSERS ON BOTH SIDES AS WE HEAR IN THIS BACKGROUND REPORT BY V.O.A. JOHN ROBERTS IN SALISBURY.

VOICE:

DESPITE BITTERNESS AND FRUSTRATION TOWARD THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, BISHOP MUZOREWA AND HIS UNITED AFRICAN NATIONAL COUNCIL DECIDED TO STAY IN THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT IN WHAT HE CALLED THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE. THE BISHOP HAD THREATED TO WALK OUT OVER THE FIRING OF A NEWLY-APPOINTED BLACK MINISTER FOR CRITICIZING RHODESIA'S POLICE PRACTICES.

THE DECISION TO STAY IN WAS HAMMERED OUT BY THE BISHOP'S SEVENTY-MAN PARTY COUNCIL DURING EIGHT HOURS OF DISCUSSIONS THAT HE HIMSELF DESCRIBED AS ROUGH, AND THAT REPORTEDLY INVOLVED A NUMBER OF HEATED EXCHANGES. SOURCES SAID THE YOUNGER, MORE RADICAL MEMBERS OF THE U.A.N.C. ARGUED THAT THE FIRING OF MISTER BYRON HOVE SHOWED THAT THE WHITES ARE STILL IN CHARGE IN RHODESIA AND THAT THE ONLY HONORABLE THING TO DO WAS PULL OUT. BISHOP MUZOREWA AND A NUMBER OF OLDER, MORE CONSERVATIVE PARTY LEADERS WERE SAID TO FEEL THAT PRESERVING THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT OUTWEIGHED ALL OTHER CONSIDERATIONS.

THE BISHOP COMMANDS A LARGER POLITICAL FOLLOWING THAN ANY OF THE OTHER BLACK NATIONALIST LEADERS IN THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL--

REVEREND NDABININGI SITHOLE OR CHIEF JEREMAYAH CHIRAU. IN POLITICAL SPEECHES LAST SATURDAY, BISHOP MUZOREWA URGED HIS AUDIENCE TO TRUST HIM TO DO THE RIGHT THING ABOUT THE HOVE AFFAIR. BUT POLITICAL OBSERVERS IN SALISBURY BELIEVE THAT BY DECIDING NOT TO PULL OUT, HE WILL LOSE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CREDIBILITY AND GRASS ROOTS SUPPORT AMONG RHODESIA'S BLACKS.

ON THE OTHER SIDE, OBERSVERS BELIEVE THE HOVE AFFAIR HAS ALSO CAST SUSPICION ON THE MOTIVES AND METHODS OF MISTER SMITH, AND THE OTHER TWO MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. IT HAS GIVEN AMMUNITION TO CRITICS IN RHODESIA AND ABROAD WHO CLAIM THAT THE BLACK MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ARE LITTLE MORE THAN PUPPET' MANIPULATED BY THE WHITE MINORITY. SO ALTHOUGH THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT IS STILL STANDING, HOWEVER, SHAKILY, THE HOVE AFFAIR HAS, IN THE BISHOP'S WORDS, "LEFT A NASTY SMELL IN THE AIR."

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